

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A magnetic recording medium, comprising:
  - an elongate non-magnetic substrate;
  - a foundation layer formed by a vacuum thin-film forming technique ~~on~~ over said non-magnetic substrate;
  - a magnetic layer having a thickness of 55 nm or less formed by a vacuum thin film forming technique ~~on~~ over said non-magnetic substrate such that the magnetic layer does not include a non-magnetic binder, wherein
    - ~~a signal is reproduced by sliding one of a magneto-resistive head and a giant magneto-resistive head,~~ and
    - said foundation layer is formed of a silicon nitride film having a thickness of 2 nm to 50 nm.
2. (Currently Amended) A magnetic recording medium, comprising:
  - an elongate non-magnetic substrate;
  - a magnetic layer having a thickness of 55 nm or less formed by a vacuum thin film evaporation technique ~~on~~ over one principal surface of said non-magnetic substrate such that the magnetic layer does not include a non-magnetic binder; and
  - a back foundation layer formed by a vacuum thin-film forming technique ~~on~~ over a principal surface of said non-magnetic substrate on a side opposite said magnetic layer, wherein
    - ~~a signal is reproduced by sliding one of a magneto-resistive head and a giant magneto-resistive head,~~ and
    - said back foundation layer is formed of a silicon nitride film.

3. (Original) The magnetic recording medium according to claim 2, wherein said back foundation layer is formed of a silicon nitride film having a thickness of 2 nm to 200 nm.

4. (Currently Amended) The magnetic recording medium according to claim 2, wherein said back foundation layer and a back coating layer are formed in layers ~~on~~ over said principal surface of said non-magnetic substrate on the side opposite the side on which said magnetic layer is formed.